

REMARKS

The Office Action dated May 10, 2004 has been carefully considered. Claims 1-49 have been canceled. New claims 50-69 have been added and are pending in the present application. These claims find support in the originally-filed specification at, for example, page 6, lines 28-29, Figure 11, and original claims 1-49. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the present application and entry of the above amendments in view of the following remarks are respectfully requested.

I. CLAIM REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,488,701 to Nolting *et al.* ("Nolting"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As stated above, claim 1 has been canceled, thereby obviating the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) in view of Nolting. Claims 50-69 are pending in the present application and are believed to be patentable over Nolting for the following reasons.

Independent claim 50 recites a method of manufacturing a stent comprising providing a main body portion having a first end portion, a second end portion, and a middle portion having a surface and a flow passage defined therethrough, wherein the first end portion comprises an edge, and forming a biocompatible coating directly on at least a portion of the edge, wherein the middle portion surface is free of the biocompatible coating. Claims 51-66 depend from claim 50, and thus also include these limitations.

Independent claim 67 recites a method for manufacturing a stent comprising providing a main body portion having a first end portion, a second end portion, a middle portion having an outer surface and a flow passage defined therethrough, wherein the first end portion comprises a first edge and the second end portion comprises a second edge, forming a first biocompatible coating directly on at least a portion of the first edge, and forming a second biocompatible coating directly on at least a portion of the second edge, wherein the first biocompatible coating and the second biocompatible coating each comprise a polymer or a drug and the middle portion surface is free of the first or second biocompatible coating. Claim 68 depends from claim 67, and thus also includes these limitations.

Independent claim 69 recites a method for manufacturing a stent comprising providing a main body portion having a first end portion, a second end portion, a middle portion having an outer surface, and a flow passage defined therethrough, wherein the first end portion comprises an edge and applying a sleeve directly on at least a portion of the edge, wherein the sleeve comprises at least one layer of a material comprising a bioadhesive, a

drug, or a combination thereof, and wherein the middle portion surface is free of the layer of material.

In contrast, Nolting discloses a stent-graft assembly comprising a stent having at least one support member wherein “[s]ome or all of the support member or members comprise a coating which substantially encapsulates the coated support member or members” and “the stent-graft includes an ultra-thin membrane or covering which is attached to the coating.” (Col. 5, lines 32-38). To make Nolting’s stent-graft assembly, a coating is applied to a stent, and then the coated stent is covered or lined with a thin tube or membrane. (Col. 6, lines 4-6). Nolting further discloses that a solvent is introduced to attach the coating to the membrane and then the stent-graft assembly is cured. (Col. 6, lines 6-8).

However, unlike in the present invention, Nolting does not disclose or suggest that the surface of the middle portion of its stent is free of the coating which directly covers or contacts the surface of the end portion or an edge of the end portion. In fact, Nolting teaches that the coating **20** that is directly disposed on the surface of the ends of its stent also covers the surface of the middle of Nolting’s stent (*see Figure 2 of Nolting*). Thus, by teaching that the coating **20**, which is applied directly to the surface of the ends of the stent, covers the surface of the middle of Nolting’s stent, Nolting teaches away from the present invention where the surface of the middle portion of the stent is free of the coating that is applied directly to the end portions of the stent.

Furthermore, Nolting also fails to teach or disclose a sleeve that is in direct contact with at least a portion of the edge, wherein the middle portion surface of the stent is free of the sleeve material, as recited in claim 69.

For the above reasons, it is believed that new claims 50-69 are patentable over Nolting. Accordingly, allowance of new claims 50-69 is respectfully requested.

II. CONCLUSION

In light of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that the rejection of claim 1 has been overcome and that the present application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner not agree with Applicants' position, then a personal or telephonic interview is respectfully requested to discuss any remaining issues and expedite the eventual allowance of the application.

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Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosures